



**King Of the  
hill**

# **Chess Strategy**

**By Pawn Street Blues**



# Chapter 1

## Averting Queen Traps

**In my speed games one of my favorite openings is to activate the Queen in a seeming sacrifice to trick my opponent. Let's view the first example:**





**Queen takes and gives  
check and we reach  
a critical position for  
Black...**





**Black blunders  
by blocking  
with Bishop  
now leading  
to a forced  
win...**



**Queen takes with check  
and now the King is  
free to access d4 and  
win the game.**



**Going back to the critical position, Black should have utilized the Queen...**

**White should respond with Queen takes Queen and the game continues with tempo on Black's side.**

**Two more examples.  
Here we will see Black's best move to stop a Queen sac altogether.**



**Instead of Black playing pawn to e5, this move blocks e4 from the King and Black is well guarded and ready to give Bishop check or attack the Queen. White is at a huge disadvantage.**

**Finally, let's look at a sequence a beginner might be tricked by.**





**Pawn to f5 blocks the Queen and there are no moves to stop the King from advancing to one of the squares.**

## Chapter 2

### **Always be looking for a finishing Check in King of the Hill**

**Sometimes a Check is all you need...**

**Unique chances arise in KOTH where-in  
a Check, often times sacrificial in  
nature, will open a winning square  
in the center. It can often be obvious  
but to a player accustomed to standard  
chess be overlooked in speed games.  
Plant a seed in your head that says  
always be mindful of the position  
of your opponents King and if it can  
be targeted to win the game. Let's  
look at a few of such positions:**





## Chapter 3

# Always Look For An En Passant in King Of The Hill

**The en passant is a powerful move...**

**Experienced / high rated standard chess players when playing KOTH will usually try to dominate the center early in the game by advancing their pawns then castling. Remember this going into your game.**

**If you're an opposite player like me that rarely castles and prefers a king rush, utilizing the en passant will clear space for the future and sometimes be the deciding factor to get rid of a last defensive piece.**

**Here are some positions where an en passant is a useful response:**





**The theme to these positions is clearing room for the central squares. Think longterm where you want your King to be and don't fall prey (especially in speed games) to simply accepting blocked space when you can instead retaliate with an en passant.**

## **Chapter 4**

### **To Castle or King rush?**

**I say punish the Castlers in the opening....**

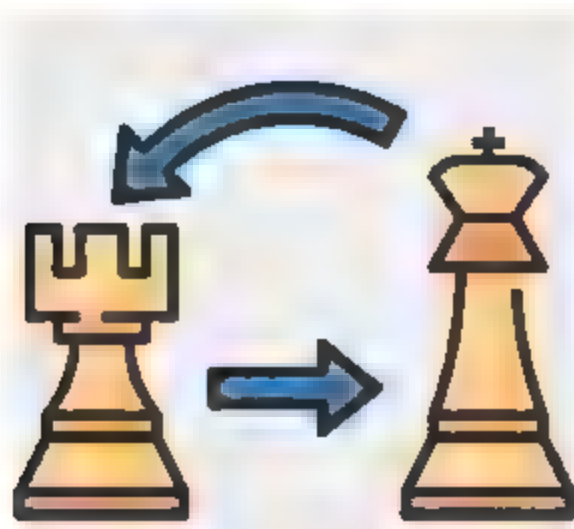
**In my 140k+ King Of The Hill games I would wager I have castled maybe less than 50 times. Castling in the opening impedes the King from the center in exchange for safety and rook collaboration. If the opponent likewise chooses the same route then we have a King Of The Hill game focused on standard chess ideas and the center only an afterthought if it arises as a choice in the endgame. I've noticed a lot of high rated players go to their comfort zone and try to play it standard.**

**When games play out like standard chess there's a lack of lines for creating a passage to the center for the King. What I want to say is it's not "wrong" to castle early but it's not a necessity and aggressive preparation for rushing your King can counter your opponent castling adequately. Furthermore, if it's a higher rated player that treats the game like standard you can throw him or her off by playing it for the center early,**



**sometimes even stopping them from castling altogether from your center threats.**

**So it's a matter of taste, which type of player are you? Do you have a traditional checkmate in mind where a King in the center is just a fluke chance, or do you pose your pieces to go for the center like a true Kother?**



## Chapter 5

**Think Before A Queens Trade in this particular setup!  
Don't trade right away if you can improve  
the position...**

**Sometimes the mark of intermediate-and-above  
King Of The Hill players versus beginners is how  
they react to a potential Queens trade when the  
Kings are behind them and they are locked in a file.  
Think of the future once they are off the board. If  
you can delay the trade to add back up to the  
position it can be favorable. Let's look at an  
example where both players add defenses before  
trading.**



**Whenever this setup occurs, make it a reflex (if it  
isn't already) to consider delaying the trade.**

## Chapter 6

### Sacrificing Pieces For The Center...

Learn to spot gateways to the center

There are often positions that arise where a sequence of sacrifices will help land your King home in the middle. Let's look at the position:



What would you play as White? In standard chess, sacrificing the Knight and Queen for the f5 pawn would seem crazy at first glance but notice the White King has an opportune pass to e4 once it's cleared. Let's view the sequence:





**Black has no way of stopping the King from reaching e4 after the Knight is lost.**

## Chapter 7

**In conclusion, I wish you never ending luck in your ventures into KOTH. I would like to thank lichess for providing me with countless hours of joy exploring this variant. Thanks for reading!**

